



7246 704 111-111-111  
American Society of  
Health-System Pharmacists®

7272 Wisconsin Avenue  
Bethesda, Maryland 20814  
301-657-3000  
Fax: 301-664-8877  
www.ashp.org

March 31, 2004

Vice-Admiral Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.S.  
Surgeon General of the United States  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Room 18-66  
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Vice-Admiral Carmona:

The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) congratulates you on your appointment as the new Chair of the Department of Health and Human Services' Task Force on Drug Importation. When I met with you on March 19, 2003, you agreed with ASHP's position on the importance of maintaining the integrity of the pharmaceutical supply chain. We know that you will provide outstanding leadership as the task force prepares its report to Congress.

ASHP is the 30,000-member national professional and scientific association that represents pharmacists who practice in hospitals, health maintenance organizations, long-term care facilities, home care agencies, and other components of health care systems. Because of our long history of advocacy about the importance of maintaining the integrity of the pharmaceutical supply chain, we would like to be one of the professional health care provider groups invited to the task force's April 28 "listening session."

The issue of the safety of the drug supply is being obscured by the issue of allowing individual citizens to purchase prescription drugs at lower prices from overseas locations. However, ASHP continues to be committed to safeguarding consumers' health by ensuring that they can purchase only safe and effective drugs. That is why ASHP's House of Delegates will be voting in June to reaffirm the following policy position: "To oppose importation of pharmaceuticals except in cases in which the Food and Drug Administration determines it would be necessary for the health and welfare of United States citizens."

ASHP is eager to assist the Drug Importation Task Force in its efforts to meet this challenge. I look forward to hearing from you regarding an invitation to present our views at the April 28<sup>th</sup> listening session. Our contact will be Gary C. Stein, Ph.D., ASHP's Director of Federal Regulatory Affairs. Dr. Stein can be reached by phone at 301-657-3000, ext. 1316, or by e-mail at [gstein@ashp.org](mailto:gstein@ashp.org).

Sincerely,

Henri R. Manasse, Jr., Ph.D., Sc.D.  
Executive Vice President and CEO

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Pharmacists helping people make the best use of medicines

*Appreciated your remarks  
at the APHA meeting in Seattle!*

*[Signature] C21*